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Montana State Fund Guardian

March 1998

New and Improved Internet Site Nearly Complete

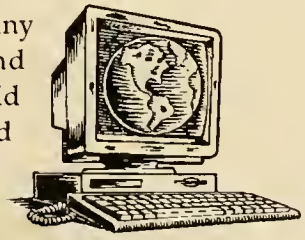
The State Fund Internet core team has been meeting twice a month since October to update and redesign our web site. The new site is nearly complete, and is scheduled for launch in April. The current State Fund Internet address is stfund.state.mt.us.

The Internet is one of the most efficient ways for us to provide information to our customers, producers, job seekers, and other interested individuals. We also plan to develop interactive capabilities to provide and receive information electronically. Potential audiences include insurance producers, medical providers, employers, and employees.

The new design uses a puzzle piece image and the theme: "Montana State Fund—we put the pieces of workers' compensation together." In addition to the Home Page, there are pages on Safety, Claims, Policy Services, Fraud, and FAQs (frequently asked questions). The site is under construction, but can be accessed through the State Fund Intranet. It is located in Departments/Internet Core Team/The New Internet.

A representative from each department is on the Core Team. Members are Ed Benasky, Mark Barry, Bernie Hewitt, John Gneckow, Denise Molley, Larry Nelson, and Aidan Myhre. These members deserve tremendous credit for compiling essential information and designing an effective and creative web page.

Please share your ideas about the new site and any information you and your department would like to see included with a group member.



STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

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PAALS Testing Scheduled

By Darcy Johnson

On February 20, 1998, the PAALS Phase II requirements were finalized and signed off by Information Engineering, Inc. (IEI) and State Fund. Here are some important functions to be incorporated in Phase II of PAALS:

- The ability to pay dividends
- Ability to access group experience data on-line
- Automating our Construction Credit Program
- Electronic calendaring system for Audit and Loss Control
- Calculate and bill late payment fees
- Accept payments via credit card
- Accept payments via electronic funds transfer
- Ability to discount when applying early payment

IEI has taken the final Phase II requirements and created nine builds. A build is a session with IEI and State Fund to introduce State Fund to the windows and additional functionality of the system. The PAALS core team prioritized the builds to establish the order in which the builds will be presented to State Fund.

Continued on page 4.

Published monthly by and for the employees of the Montana State Fund.

President's Message

From time to time the subject of the State Fund's role in the insurance industry has been aired. As a public agency, our mission includes providing Montana employers with a guaranteed and stable source of workers' compensation insurance at an affordable cost. Also included in our mission is to provide injured workers with essential benefits and effective claim management. The State Fund is not in business to make a profit. Any additional revenue at the end of the year is returned to our policyholders in the form of rate reductions or to build necessary surplus.

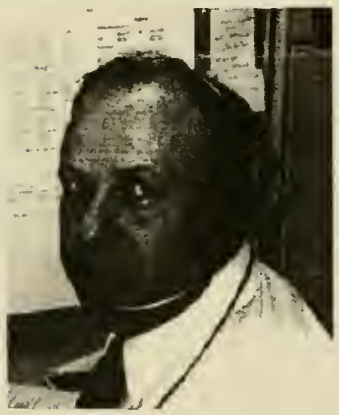
Our FY99 Strategic Business Plan emphasizes our ability to be competitive and successful in the marketplace.

In our upcoming FY99 Strategic Business Plan, we have placed a special emphasis on our ability to be competitive and successful in the marketplace. To be competitive we need to retain our existing customers and attract new customers to the State Fund. Furthermore, we need to ensure the success of our agency partners and other group associations. To achieve this, we must effectively manage our resources and continue to offer the highest quality of service.

One of our greatest challenges is to compete for a balanced book of business with private carriers in Montana. By maintaining a balance of large and small policyholders, we offer greater stability in our rates and keep premiums for smaller employers more affordable.

I believe our upcoming strategic plan will promote confidence in our ability to be a viable state fund and map out the necessary steps to remain an industry leader.

Employee of the Month



Andy Anderson, Senior Customer Service Representative is February's Employee of the Month. His coworkers say he has been invaluable in helping the CSU reach their goals through his ability to listen and instruct, and through his work on the training manual.

"He has been invaluable in helping solidify our unit so we can focus on our customers. He demonstrates patience with his coworkers, listens to problems, and assists with solutions," said one member of Andy's team.

Andy is a helpful resource for new employees. One coworker explains, "Andy checks on me every day to see how things are going. He offers suggestions and is always available if I need help."

Thanks Andy, for doing your job every day with patience and a smile!

Kudos Kolumn

Kudos for Customer Service

May Holberg of Broadwater Flying J expressed how much she appreciated the way State Fund handles claims. She especially mentioned **Myrna Hammond** and couldn't say enough good things about her.

Gretchen Fitzgerald at Great Falls Clinic wrote a memo thanking **Andy Anderson** for his outstanding customer service. She wrote, "Thanks so much for your quick response to my request for the claim numbers. I appreciate your help."

Mike Hruska from Bozeman Machine and Manufacturing says, "I enjoy working with the **Customer Service Unit** at the State Fund because everyone I speak to is very pleasant to work with."

John Roberts, insurance producer with Hoiness LaBar, complimented **Mona Tangen** on her work with one of his accounts. He said she was very courteous and professional.

Policyholder Johney Royer recently said to Lee McBride, "I love you guys! I love the great service State Fund gives me. I don't care what others say about state folks, I think you guys are pretty sharp."

Kudos to Rita Bird

"Thanks to Rita for taking the time to prepare and train us on speed reading. We really appreciate it!" —Barb, Deb, and Kim

Send a Kudos to a coworker!

If one of your coworkers deserves a pat on the back, zip or deadhead your kudo anytime to Shannon Copps for publication in the Guardian.

ICCW Update

The Inter-Departmental Coordinating Committee for Women was created in 1976 by Governor Tom Judge with the goal of encouraging the participation of women in state government. Shannon Copps is the State Fund ICCW representative. The Committee consists of representatives from each state agency who meet monthly and work to create positive change for all state employees. Six subcommittees exist including:

1. EEO/Personnel
2. Day Care and Employee Benefits
3. Training
4. Planning
5. Take Our Daughters to Work
6. Networking/Mentoring

Subcommittee Events/Updates

Day Care: Subcommittee members sent out a Request for Information packet to interested parties to solicit information and assistance regarding the operation of a daycare for children and grandchildren of state employees. Members have also been working with the School District which may be able to provide a facility, and the City of Helena which has expressed interest in a daycare facility for city employees. The goal is to have a daycare established by September 1998.

Networking/Mentoring: This new subcommittee will host a Kick-off and Luncheon for the State Government Network event on April 24. It will be held from 12-1pm at the Aladdin Inn with lunch available from Frontier Pies for $6.50. Joyce Hocker, Communications Professor at the University of Montana, will speak for 10-15 minutes. To sign up contact: Jean Branscum, Department of Labor and Industry (ext. 1520).

Take our Daughters to Work: This year's event will be held on April 23. Welcoming Ceremony speakers include Governor Racicot, Lt. Governor Judy Martz, Nancy McCaffree, Pat Haffey, and Laurie Ekanger. Participation is expected to be high with all 7th graders from Clancy and Montana City Schools attending and all 7th graders from Radley, Helena, and C.R. Anderson Middle Schools contacted. For more information on volunteering to be a "shadow" for a couple hours, contact: Shannon Copps.

Note:

The Compensation Corner column will resume when the new Human Resources Program Coordinator is hired.

Human Resources

Personnel changes as of March 14, 1998

NewHires

Cindy Vitcovich-Lukkes, Claim
Joanne Thompson, Claim

Departures

Bob Pennington
Johnny Samples

Training Calendar

Working with Difficult People: March 30 & 31, 10am-12pm

Contemporary Writing Skills: April 1, 2 & 3, 10am-12pm

Getting to Know Human Resources: April 8, 9-10am

Dealing with an Angry Public: April 14 & 15, 10am-12pm

EAP Orientation for Employees: April 21, 8:30-8:45am

FMLA for Supervisors: April 24, 1-2pm

Effective Interviewing Skills: April 24, 2-4pm

Mailing Madness

Reporting updates in procedures to producers; proclaiming year end achievements to legislators; announcing new products to customers. Is March mailing materials madness month?

• Our FY97 Annual Report will soon be off the press and ready to distribute to employees, insurance producers, legislators, and policyholders with $10,000 plus in premium. If employees have requests from others for annual reports, please contact Aidan Myhre.

• Legislators will also receive a Legislative Update covering recent State Fund changes which occurred as a result of legislation passed in 1995 and 1997. A copy of the Update is posted on each bulletin board.

• Our semi-annual newsletter, *the Pilot*, will be printed and mailed to all policyholders the first week in April. This edition covers Employers Liability Coverage, Other States Coverage, agency expansion, and fraud. The new fraud poster will also go out in the newsletter.

Continued on page 4.

New Employee Profiles

Mel Lockridge has been with the State Fund as a Loss Control Consultant for about two months. Mel's previous jobs include training specialist for the Oregon Department of Transportation, safety consultant for Rocky Mountain Associates, and safety and organizational development trainer for Champion International. Mel earned a degree in safety and organization development from University of Montana. He is originally from Missoula and enjoys hunting, fishing, and cross-country skiing in his spare time.

Jacqui Weschenfelder joins the State Fund as a Claim Assistant in the BC Unit. Prior to her work here, she worked as a chiropractic assistant. She earned an associates degree as a medical secretary. Jacqui's hometown is Shepherd, Montana.

Editor: Aidan Myhre
Managing Editor: Shannon Copps
Employee Reporters:
Kathy Rowsey Jean Ketchel
Charlie Adams Lee McBride
Jay Phillips

Please call 444-6502 with comments or suggested articles.

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PAALS, continued from page 1.

The efforts on PAALS phase I continues. In mid-April, IEI will be done programming Phase I and will have completed their testing. In May, the PAAL's core team and PAAL's test team will receive training on the system. The system is scheduled to be delivered to the State Fund on June 1, 1998. User acceptance testing will commence June 1 and will last for 3 months. State Fund users will be trained in September and the PAALS Phase I launch will be October 1, 1998.

After Phase I has been implemented, the functions from Phase II will be tested by the State Fund and migrated into the new system as quickly as possible.

Customer Comments

Comments from recent closed claim surveys.

"You're doing a fine job now. Don't change it."

"I really don't know how the State Fund could be improved. My experience with State Fund was nothing but positive."

"Gina Hout, my claim adjuster, has done a wonderful job of getting me through my back injury claim."

"I can't think of any way this whole process could have gone better. Laurie Kuntz was wonderful, very professional and caring."

"I feel you did very well. Your services were greatly appreciated!"

Mailing Madness, continued from page 3.

- Each month, we try to send out a Producer Update to keep our agencies in the loop and well-informed about State Fund activities. We release the third Update this week.
- Finally, newspaper ads to announce our agency partnership in twenty-three communities will run next week. The first ad appeared in the Billings Gazette on March 20, and the ad runs in the remaining cities on April 8. A copy of the Gazette ad is posted on each bulletin board.